

**LIPE LAW OFFICE**

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TO: COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: KALEN LIPE (P38814)  
811 RIVER AVENUE  
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RE: **NOVEMBER 7, 2011, LEGISLATIVE HEARING IN ST.  
IGNACE REGARDING HOUSE BILL 5095**

I have practiced law in the Upper Peninsula since fall of 1988. I arrived in Iron Mountain following 30-years of residency and education in Detroit, MI. The quality and the thoroughness of the 41<sup>st</sup> Circuit, and 95B & A District Courts was apparent from the outset.

Circuit Court Judges "ride the circuit" among three counties; Iron County, Dickinson County and Menominee County, they manage busy dockets. The 95B District Court covers two counties; Iron County and Dickinson County. Menominee County, 95A District Court, is a very busy Court. Over time, the Trial Court in Iron County developed and relieves some of the very busy Dickinson County District Court and Circuit Courts. The Iron County Court continues to operate effectively and efficiently, as do both Menominee County Courts and Dickinson County Courts.

The Probate Court functions are likewise busy in all three counties. We have active and thorough Social Services, Child Protective proceedings and the like. We have well trained and diligent Prosecuting Attorneys in all three counties. We have involved and well trained Friend of the Court offices in all three counties. Because these agencies perform their tasks well, the Courts are busy handling enforcement actions, protective

actions for the incompetent adult and family matters and ensure civil matters do not languish. Citizens of the area are guaranteed quick and thorough resolutions. Case load redistribution is likely to harm this efficiency.

Stable national and international industries maintain operations in this three county area of the Upper Peninsula in the knowledge that local communities are safe and secure and that business affairs will be fairly and swiftly adjudicated. Because we have a stable and efficient judiciary and safe and secure community, our school systems are consistent recipients of statewide awards for excellence. Our law enforcement units are well trained and appropriately staffed due in large part to an efficient judiciary.

To eliminate the District Judge in Menominee County and reduce the 41<sup>st</sup> Circuit by one judge, the pinnacle of local population security would erode. As a practicing attorney, I appreciate that our judiciary is not only erudite but accessible and efficient. Such characteristics occur in the currently staffed environment and are sure to be lost if the tri-county work load must be maintained by fewer judges.

Very truly yours,



Kalen Lipe

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Attorney at Law